

Linguistics, MA

Graduate programs in the Department of Linguistics emphasize theory and research. Students interested in non-university careers also may take courses in applied linguistics and other fields as an option in the MA program.

The University of Iowa Department of Linguistics has particular strengths in phonology, syntax, and second language acquisition (SLA).

The phonology curriculum emphasizes current theoretical perspectives, including optimality theory, and the collection, description, and interpretation of novel phonological and phonetic data. Courses feature extensive work in data analysis and problem solving, focusing on construction and evaluation of phonological theories, particularly in light of new empirical data.

The syntax curriculum includes the dual emphases of empirical and theoretical perspectives. It offers a variety of foundational courses that build analytic and argumentation skills, as well as specialized coursework on current issues in syntactic theory. The courses consist of intensive work in problem solving. They combine discovery and description of new linguistic data with exploration of the implications of such facts in testing and constructing syntactic theories.

The curriculum in second language acquisition includes courses that provide an overview and analysis of current SLA research. Work focuses on experimental research investigating the influence of the first language, environmental and contextual factors, and related topics.

Learning Outcomes

The master's degree in linguistics is intended for two different student groups. The MA with the Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) focus is intended for students who wish to work as TESL professionals at the college or community college level. The MA degree targets students who want to pursue a PhD in linguistics or are interested in linguistics-related professional areas. Unless otherwise stated, the student learning outcomes are for both the MA degree and the MA degree with a TESL focus.

Students are expected to:

- be familiar with the basics of theoretical linguistic approaches to phonology and syntax, be able to analyze linguistic data using formal theoretical linguistics approaches, and be familiar with the basics of applied phonetics and approaches to multilingual language acquisition research;
- be familiar with the basics of empirical research in linguistics and be able to use appropriate software and methods to understand original research;
- be able to write a formal research paper in syntax and phonology demonstrating a critical evaluation of a particular problem or issue they have investigated;
- be familiar with the basics of multilingual language acquisition from a theoretical and empirical perspective;
- formulate a research project by the end of their third semester if they have articulated the goal of continuing to a PhD program in linguistics;
- possibly explore course options in areas related to their professional development if they are not planning on continuing to a PhD program in linguistics; and

- be able to teach English as a second language (ESL) to adult learners and understand the theory and practice behind ESL teaching and evaluation if they are TESL trained.